

# DOMESTIC ABUSE AND COVID-19

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR SCHOOLS

IT IS WIDELY RECOGNISED THAT DOMESTIC ABUSE IS EXACERBATED BY THE CURRENT COVID-19 LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS.

**Domestic abuse is a pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and/or violent behaviour.**

Lockdown restrictions increase opportunity for coercive control and abuse. There are fewer opportunities for those living with abuse to have contact with others, get help or remove themselves from the situation. Children and young people do not have the opportunity to see trusted adults (including in school), to talk to others about what is happening in their family.

A lot of uncertainties remain, but we are expecting the number of disclosures and referrals in relation to domestic abuse to increase as restrictions ease, children return to schools and we move towards living a new normal. Often school is a child's safe haven, obviously with schools being shut they haven't had that.

Children may have experienced changing family dynamics, increased tensions, fewer coping mechanisms, some will have experienced significant levels of domestic abuse.

We realise schools will be addressing children's wellbeing across a range of issues, but domestic abuse will have been significant for a number of children in your school.

Children may display their feelings and emotions more/differently than before. For some children they may be very angry and their behaviour could be disruptive within the classroom. For others they may be quiet and withdrawn.

## How do I manage a disclosure from a child or young person?

- Provide a safe, calm environment for the child to talk to you.
- Never promise to keep what a child is telling you a secret.
- Believe what they say
- Listen, but do not ask the child to repeat any of what they are telling you.
- Avoid asking questions and turning the process into an interview
- Record all information using the child's words

## **In addition to Care and Welfare Processes within the school the following Domestic Abuse helpline numbers may be useful:**

### **Children (boys and girls)**

#### **Fife Women's Aid**

Tel: 0808 802 5555 (available 24/7)

#### **Cedar Project**

Tel: 01592 583676

cedar.project@fife.gov.uk

### **Women**

#### **Fife Women's Aid**

Tel: 0808 802 5555 (available 24/7)

#### **Saje Freedom Programme**

Tel: 07909482279/ 07887248354

info@sajescotland.org.uk

### **Men, women and children**

#### **National domestic abuse helpline**

0800 027 1234

safer.scot

## **The following resources are useful to explore domestic abuse with young people:**

[youtu.be/xlwR71OhbV4](https://youtu.be/xlwR71OhbV4) (domestic abuse help)

[thehideout.org.uk](https://thehideout.org.uk) (domestic abuse website)

[womensaid.scot](https://womensaid.scot) (domestic abuse)

[youtu.be/SJOjpprbfeE](https://youtu.be/SJOjpprbfeE) (feelings)

[youtu.be/XHgLYI9KZ-A](https://youtu.be/XHgLYI9KZ-A) (domestic abuse)

[youtu.be/HznVuCVQd10](https://youtu.be/HznVuCVQd10) (feelings) older children

